R E P O R T R E S U M E S

ED 016 187 AC 001 963

DOCUMENTS AND INSTRUCTIONS OF THE ACCREDITING COMMISSION.
NATIONAL HOME STUDY COUNCIL, WASHINGTON, D.C.

PUB DATE SEP 61

EDRS PRICE MF-$0.25 HC-$1.88 45P.

DESCRIPTORS- *ACCREDITATION (INSTITUTIONS), *EVALUATION METHODS, *PROGRAM EVALUATION, *CORRESPONDENCE SCHOOLS, *GUIDES, ADMISSION (SCHOOL), EDUCATIONAL OBJECTIVES, INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS, TEACHER QUALIFICATIONS, PHYSICAL FACILITIES, TUITION, PROMOTION (PUBLICIZE), STUDENT PERSONNEL SERVICES, RATING SCALES, NATIONAL HOME STUDY COUNCIL,

THE NATIONAL HOME STUDY COUNCIL, A VOLUNTARY MEMBERSHIP ORGANIZATION OF PRIVATE HOME STUDY SCHOOLS, HAS PUBLISHED UNDER ONE COVER THE DOCUMENTS AND INSTRUCTIONS OF ITS ACCREDITING COMMISSION. THE FIRST OF NINE DOCUMENTS STATES THE OBJECTIVES AND PROCEDURES FOR ACCREDITATION BY THE COUNCIL. IT EXPLAINS (1) HOW A SCHOOL SUBMITS AN APPLICATION FOR ACCREDITATION, GOES THROUGH A SELF-EVALUATION, AND SUBMITS REPORTS OF THAT EVALUATION, (2) HOW THE EXAMINING COMMITTEE VISITS THE SCHOOL, GATHERS ADDITIONAL DATA, STIMULATES IDEAS FOR IMPROVEMENT WHEREVER POSSIBLE AND MAKES A FACTUAL REPORT TO THE ACCREDITING COMMISSION, AND (3) HOW THE ACCREDITING COMMISSION ASSEMBLES OTHER DATA FROM SOURCES SUCH AS STUDENTS, GRADUATES, AND GOVERNMENTAL AGENCIES, AND MEETS TO CONSIDER THE REPORTS AND TAKE ACTION. OTHER DOCUMENTS INCLUDED ARE THE APPLICATION FOR ACCREDITATION, A RATING FORM FOR EXAMINERS AND SUBJECT SPECIALIST REVIEWERS, A GUIDE TO SELF-EVALUATION, A REQUEST FOR EXAMINING COMMITTEE VISIT, INSTRUCTIONS FOR STUDIES OF STUDENT PROGRESS, A SCHEDULE FOR PAYING FEES, AND THE ANNUAL REPORT BY MEMBER SCHOOLS. ALSO INCLUDED ARE STATEMENTS OF OBJECTIVES AND PROCEDURES, STANDARDS FOR ACCREDITING THE SCHOOLS, RESPONSIBILITIES OF MEMBERS OF EXAMINING COMMITTEES, AND HOW THE ACCREDITING COMMISSION RECEIVES AND ACTS UPON APPLICATIONS. (RT)

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
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ED016187

Documents and Instructions of the ACCREDITING COMMISSION

NATIONAL HOME STUDY COUNCIL
2000 "K" Street, N. W.
Washington 6, D. C.

A000 1963

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FOREWORD

The accreditation movement grew out of the need for impartial knowledge regarding the quality of individual educational institutions.

Well over a half century ago both educators and the public began to realize that great individual differences existed among educational institutions of the same general class. An institution's own opinion of the merit of its work is insufficient. Consequently, in nearly every educational field, accrediting agencies have developed which utilize the judgment of peers in assessing educational quality.

According to Good's Dictionary of Education, an accrediting agency is:

> "an organization that sets up criteria for judging the quality of educational institutions, determines the extent to which the institutions meet these criteria, and issues some sort of public announcement concerning the institutions found to be of acceptable quality; may be either a governmental bureau, such as a state department of education, or a voluntary organization, such as a regional association of colleges and secondary schools."

Modern procedure as developed by voluntary accrediting associations usually include these five practices:

1. Members of the association agree upon desirable standards.
2. A school studies its own purposes and program thoroughly prior to accreditation.
3. A fact-finding committee visits the school.
4. A judicial body set up by the association considers all pertinent data and accredits.
5. A school is judged in light of the success with which its announced objectives are, in fact, fulfilled.

The accreditation documents on the following pages follow this general plan.

The meaning of accreditation

To the public and students, accreditation means that the education offered meets acceptable standards of quality -- standards established by the field.

To the school, accreditation means that its work is adjudged meritorious by its peers.

Qualitative standards are used in evaluation. The whole institution is evaluated -- its education program, its business relationships with its students, and its financial responsibility. Accreditation applies to the institution as a whole and does not necessarily mean that all educational programs are of equal merit. Likewise, it does not mean that all accredited institutions are of identical quality.

Accredited schools are believed to offer commendable educational programs able to fulfill their announced objectives. They do not necessarily provide training appropriate to the purposes and objectives of other institutions. Inasmuch as receiving agencies and institutions always retain the right to accept or reject any education offered in terms of their own purposes, transfer of education and training cannot be guaranteed.

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Document 1.1

ACCREDITING COMMISSION
National Home Study Council

ACCREDITATION - OBJECTIVES AND PROCEDURES

The National Home Study Council is a voluntary membership organization of private home study schools. The first two objectives of the Council as enumerated in its Bylaws are:

a. to establish standards for the operation and conduct of home study schools and to serve as the accrediting agency for schools meeting these standards.

b. to promote sound educational standards and ethical business practices in the home study field.

To accomplish these purposes the Council has established an Accreditation Plan and Standards for Accrediting Home Study Schools.

a. for the specific benefit of those schools which can meet the established standards; and

b. for the general benefit of all home study schools aspiring to meet them.

To apply the standards the Board of Trustees has established an Accrediting Commission consisting of five prominent representatives from private home study schools and four outstanding educators and administrators from outside the home study field.

The interests of private home study schools and of the general public are inextricably bound together. Private schools succeed as they serve effectively the public interest and need. Accreditation benefits the public by identifying those schools which offer satisfactory services and meet acceptable standards.

Self Evaluation

Inasmuch as private home study schools are inherently interested in progress, the Accreditation Plan is designed first of all to stimulate individual schools to continuous self-evaluation and professional growth. The accreditation process is intended to cause an institution to reassess its own objectives, organization, resources, program, procedures and achievements. The process provides the opportunity and technique for a school to improve its service to society through making its self-evaluation and through obtaining the benefits of competent outside consultation.

Secondly, the accreditation process is designed to provide the basis upon which the public, employers, licensing bodies, governmental agencies, educational institutions, and other accrediting agencies can be assured that the instructional program is consistent with stated objectives.

The Accrediting Commission periodically issues a Directory of Accredited Schools, a list of private home study schools which have been evaluated and which have been found to meet and to maintain the established standards.

The Accrediting Commission determines the qualifications of a school primarily upon four types of evidence:

a. the data submitted by the institution in a Self-Evaluation Report.

b. a detailed report submitted by highly qualified subject specialists on the instructional texts, guides, and accompanying examinations and materials provided the home study student.

c. the Examining Committee Report prepared after a visit to the institution by a team of competent specialized examiners.

d. a survey of the school's reputation and standing among federal and state agencies such as the Federal Trade Commission, the State Department of Education where the school is domiciled and a compilation of reports from Better Business Bureaus, Chambers of Commerce, and other professional and business organizations.

The Accrediting Commission is concerned with a home study school as a whole. It evaluates a school in terms of its stated objectives. It seeks to determine to what extent the school is fulfilling them. In light of these objectives, the Accrediting Commission considers the financial strength of an institution, its administrative practices, its promotional methods, its tuition policies, the competence of its faculty, the soundness of its instructional materials, and its entire educational and service program.

Eligibility

While the Accreditation Plan has been set up primarily for private home study programs and institutions, the Accrediting Commission will review home study schools or departments in the United States which apply for accreditation and pay the required fees.

Schools are not eligible for accreditation unless they have been in actual operation for a period of five consecutive years immediately prior to accreditation; the date of its beginning will be that of the first student enrollment.

The Accrediting Commission reserves the right to limit the scope of its review to correspondence schools or departments offering courses and programs within its capability to examine properly. This limitation refers to programs of a highly unique or unusual character.

A correspondence school is defined as one teaching the student through the exchange of printed materials and written examinations; it is an institution that employs qualified faculty members and provides student services. Self study text programs (without examination services) are not considered "schools" within this definition.

Steps in Accreditation

Schools desiring accredited status are expected to take the initiative in going through a series of steps as outlined below. Schools seeking accreditation assume the burden of proof in presenting themselves as meeting the established standards.

1. The school will obtain from the Executive Secretary of the Accrediting Commission a complete set of the documents listed below and study them.

   1.1 Accreditation - Objectives and Procedures

   2.1 Application for Accreditation

   3.1 Standards for Accrediting Home Study Schools

   4.1 Guide to Self-Evaluation

   5.1 Request for Examining Committee Visit

   6.1 Responsibilities of Members of Examining Committees

   7.1 How the Accrediting Commission Receives, Considers, and Acts on Applications

2. The school will submit an Application for Accreditation (2.1) with the application fee. This fee entitles the school to additional copies of documents if needed and to sufficient consultation by mail and/or in the person of the Executive Secretary or a representative of the Commission to start its Self-Evaluation.

3. The school will proceed toward its Self-Evaluation. This Self-Evaluation may require two to four months in a small institution, and three to nine months in a large and complex one.

   Prior to starting its Self-Evaluation a school may want to arrange a preliminary conference with the Executive Secretary of the Accrediting Commission or a Commission member. Such a meeting will be scheduled if possible. The meeting may be useful (1) in developing further understanding of the accrediting process, purposes, and procedures, (2) in planning operational studies that should be made, and (3) in discussing the kinds of data that should be assembled.

   The necessary preliminary understanding may be developed by correspondence with the Executive Secretary.

4. The school studies itself. This is the heart of the accreditation process. In this study lies the greatest potential value to the institution. The Guide to Self-Evaluation (4.1) outlines the major aspects of this study but the study should not be limited to its requirements. The self study should include as wide a gathering and analysis of pertinent data on all aspects of the school and its work as is practicable. It should reveal the philosophy, organization, specific practices and procedures (documented wherever possible), the success of different operations, and the degree to which the school is accomplishing its stated objectives. Data should not be amassed routinely but in a constant search for new meanings, new methods and procedures, new hypotheses, and new ideas.

   The self study should involve as many of the school's home office and field staff as possible. Only as they see the purposes of the institutional review and participate in it can they be expected to grow personally and make maximum contribution to the improvement of the school. The Self-Evaluation is designed to stimulate professional growth among all staff members.

   The self study culminates in an institutional Self-Evaluation Report which satisfies the Guide to Self-Evaluation (4.1).

5. The school submits fifteen (15) typed copies of this Report to the Accrediting Commission with a Request for Examining Committee Visit (5.1) a reasonable time before it expects a visit by an Examining Committee. This Report is confidential and will be restricted to Commission and Examining Committee members.

   Under policies developed by the Accrediting Commission, the Executive Secretary will:

   a. arrange precise dates for the Examining Committee visit.

   b. select an Examining Committee and appoint its chairman.

   c. see that the Examining Committee is appropriately instructed.

   d. give each Examining Committee member a copy of the school's Self-Evaluation Report with instructions to keep it confidential.

   e. arrange for a review of the instructional materials or such samples thereof as may be deemed necessary. Such materials will usually be submitted for review by competent subject-matter authorities in advance of the Committee visit. In certain cases, however, the materials may be examined at the school.

6. The Examining Committee visits the school, gathers additional data, and stimulates ideas for improvement wherever possible. Any recommendations or constructive comments members may make to the management or staff of the school during or after the visit are made as individuals and not as representatives of the Accrediting Commission.

7. The Examining Committee, through its chairman, makes a factual Examining Committee Report to the Accrediting Commission. This report is confidential. The Examining Committee is a fact-gathering team and does not recommend any particular action to the Accrediting Commission.

8. The Commission requests and assembles other data from students, graduates, employers, and other sources if deemed desirable or necessary.

9. The Executive Secretary compiles all reports, unedited, to include the self-evaluation, the surveys of federal, state and local agencies, the examining team report, the subject specialists' review, and any additional data bearing upon the educational and ethical standards of the school.

10. The Commission meets to consider the reports and take action. The Chairman of the Examining Committee may be present to interpret the Report and to be available for questioning. The Commission may:

    a. accredit the applicant.

    b. continue the institution on the accredited list.

    c. defer decision pending progress reports, additional evidence, a statement of the school's plan for improvement, which may require a supplemental visit.

    d. deny accreditation to the applicant. Deferments and denials will be accompanied by a statement of conditions which must be met before the school may re-apply or request a review of its case.

    e. drop an institution from the accredited list.

    f. request an institution to show cause why it should not be dropped from the accredited list.

    The judgments of the Commission are final; they are not subject to veto by the National Home Study Council or its Board of Trustees.

11. The Executive Secretary notifies the school of the Commission's action, and supplies the school with a summary of specific findings and constructive comments.

12. A dated Directory of Accredited Schools is issued with a statement of the meaning of accreditation. No information is released concerning schools which apply for accreditation nor schools which are not given accredited status.

13. Schools denied accreditation may apply again after a minimum period of one year. Schools deferred accreditation may request re-examination after corrective action has been completed and a progress report submitted to the Executive Secretary. The re-examination of the deferred (or denied) school includes another visitation by the Examining Team or one or more Commission representatives and/or the Executive Secretary of the Commission to review steps taken to meet the stipulations in the original letter of deferment or denial.

Periodic and Special Re-Examinations of Accredited Schools

The Commission is authorized to divide re-evaluation into phases, provided a total evaluation, including an instructional Self-Evaluation and a visit by an Examining Committee, is completed within a five-year cycle. The Commission may call for periodic or special reports from a school and may call for the re-examination of an accredited school in less than five years after any periodic evaluation.

Document 2.1

ACCREDITING COMMISSION
National Home Study Council

APPLICATION FOR ACCREDITATION

(Submit one copy and keep a carbon)

To: Executive Secretary, Accrediting Commission
National Home Study Council
2000 K Street, N. W.
Washington 6, D. C.

We have studied the necessary documents and wish to apply for accreditation by the Accrediting Commission of the National Home Study Council.

We offer the following courses (or major curriculum areas or training programs) on which we provide systematic examination and student services:

We think we can start our Self-Evaluation around _____ and hope to submit our Self-Evaluation Report by _____, after which time we will be ready for a visit of an Examining Committee.
(Date) (Date)

Our institution is licensed/chartered by (State and Department):

Our institution is also accredited by the following professional associations with dates of their most recent visits indicated:

Document 2.1

Our school was established in the year _____.
We accepted our first home study enrollment in the year _____.
We accepted _____ new students in our most recent year ending _____ 19____.
We have _____ field representatives who solicit enrollments in the areas indicated below:

Enclosed is our check for $50.00, the application fee. Please send the indicated copies of the following documents and any others which we may need.

Enclosed or under separate cover we are sending two copies of our catalog, brochures and/or printed materials describing our courses; and under separate cover, packaged separately, two complete sets of our courses.[1] We shall await your instructions relative to forwarding additional copies of our instructional materials for review.

Sincerely yours,

_____ Institution Head

_____ School

_____ Address

_____

1. The two packaged courses will be transshipped to subject specialists and should have the contents indicated on the outside. Each course should include the school's promotional literature, catalog, enrollment blank and the lessons, guides and examinations in the sequence they are received by the student at home.

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Document 3.1

ACCREDITING COMMISSION
National Home Study Council

STANDARDS FOR ACCREDITING HOME STUDY SCHOOLS[1]

Standards for accrediting home study schools serve as guideposts in helping the school's staff and faculty evaluate important aspects of their program. The main values of the accrediting process result from continuous growth and improvement through self-evaluation. Constructive self-evaluation is the heart of the accrediting process and continuous self-examination is the basis for the improvement of educational services and selective administrative practices.

These standards have been developed by the Research and Educational Standards Committee, the Business Standards Committee, officials and other members of the National Home Study Council, with the advice and cooperation of outstanding authorities on accrediting in the United States. All standards have been approved and adopted by the National Home Study Council, the Board of Trustees, and the Accrediting Commission. These same standards provide a guide for the examiners and Commissioners when they in turn evaluate the school as part of the accrediting program.

Accredited home study schools possess the following characteristics:

I. Educational Objectives

1. Description of Objectives

Educational objectives are clearly defined and simply stated. They indicate what the educational program can do for reasonably diligent students. The character, nature, quality, value and source of the instruction and educational service are set forth in language understood by the types of students enrolled. If a course prepares for an occupation or field of occupations, the objectives clearly state the types of occupations for which preparation is given.

2. Appropriate Objectives

The objectives of the school must be of such a nature that they can be achieved through correspondence study. The educational objectives are reasonably attainable. Appropriate objectives include the development of skills, the provision of job-related training, the imparting of information, training in the application of knowledge, and the development of desirable habits and attitudes. Evaluation of the educational program is based on the announced course objectives and the success with which the objectives are fulfilled.

II. Educational Materials

1. Comprehensive Instructional Materials

Instructional materials are sufficiently comprehensive to achieve the announced objectives.

2. Up-to-date Instructional Materials

Instructional materials are accurate and reflect current knowledge and practice.

3. Authorship

Instructional materials are prepared by qualified persons competent in their fields. Materials other than standard textbooks produced by recognized publishers, are prepared by correspondence educators skilled in preparing materials for home study use.

4. Reading Level

The reading difficulty of the instructional materials is keyed to the reading competence of the average enrollee in the course.

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1 These standards serve as a minimum guide for examiners, subject specialists, and Commissioners. A rating sheet, with instructions, (Doc. 3.1.1) which reflects these standards is attached.

5. Study Instructions

Suitable instructions on how to study the course clearly indicate to the students what to do and how to learn effectively.

6. Organization of Instructional Materials

The organization and presentation of the instructional materials are in accord with the sound psychological principles of learning.

7. Teaching Devices

Instructional programs make effective use of appropriate teaching devices and supplemental instructional aids.

8. Illustrations

Illustrations are used intelligently and they have educational and/or inspirational value.

9. Printing and Binding

Instructional materials are legibly reproduced, well manufactured, suitably bound, and attractive in layout and format.

III. Educational Services

1. Examination Service

The submission of examinations which adequately cover the materials is required. Adequate evaluation, correction services and necessary counseling by the instructor are provided for examinations.

2. Resident Courses

A resident course (terminal training) should supplement the home study course whenever it is necessary to attain the stated educational objectives.

3. Handling Student Inquiries

Relevant inquiries from students are welcome and are answered promptly and satisfactorily with due regard for any legal and professional restrictions.

4. Individual Differences

Adequate provisions are made to meet the individual differences of students and to provide counseling and guidance as required to assist the student to attain his educational goals.

5. Handling Failures

Students who fail to do satisfactory work are encouraged to continue until they either show inability to do satisfactory work, or until they demonstrate satisfactory progress.

6. Encouragement of Students

A constructive program is followed to encourage students to start, continue, and finish the courses in which they have enrolled.

7. Student Evaluation of Courses

Reactions of students are sought as one basis for evaluating and improving instructional materials and services.

IV. Student Services

1. Grading of Examinations

Minimum student services include prompt return of accurately graded examinations.

2. Student Records and Materials

Ample study materials should be provided at all times to the student. Essential student records should be adequately maintained.

3. Counseling and Employment Assistance

Competent counseling should be available to students on request. If employment assistance and other services for alumni are offered, they should be as purported.

V. Student Success and Satisfaction

1. Student Success and Satisfaction

A high proportion of students are satisfied with the training and educational services.

2. Progress Through the Course

A satisfactory percentage of enrolled students start the course, continue their studies, and finish. A sample checking of the students in a school must indicate a reasonable achievement in, and completion of, their course and satisfaction with the services which the school is rendering.

VI. Qualifications of Faculty

1. Educational Director

A qualified person serves as the educational director. He has overall administrative responsibilities for the educational program and a policy making voice in advertising, sales, and collections.

2. Department Heads

In large schools department heads or other qualified persons are delegated educational, editorial, and research responsibilities within subject fields.

3. Instructors

The school has a sufficient number of qualified instructors to give individualized instructional service to each student.

VII. Admission Practices and Enrollment Agreements

1. Admission Practices

An accredited school exercises care to enroll only students who can reasonably be expected to benefit from the instruction.

2. Enrollment Agreements

The written enrollment agreement and/or other written documents left with the student specify clearly the nature and scope of the course, the services and obligations to which the school is committed and the privileges and obligations, financial and otherwise, of the student. Any changes in tuition, procedures, or rates must be made applicable to all future enrollees.

VIII. Advertising and Promotion

1. Advertising and Promotion

Advertising, promotional literature, and field representatives of home study schools make only clear and provable statements fully within the spirit of the Trade Practice Rules for Private Home Study Schools as approved by the Federal Trade Commission. Advertising in magazines, newspapers, on the radio or on television must be ethical in every respect. Flamboyant statements, emphasis on short-cuts or any statement in fact or by inference which is offensive to public educational authorities or to the general public are not to be employed in advertising or selling.

2. Control of Field Staff

Methods of selecting, training supervising, terminating, and compensating field representatives assure representatives who reflect credit upon the home study field. Field representatives, when used, must be directly responsible to the school. The school must give supervision to its representatives, and orientation or pre-employment training must be provided before permitting them to solicit enrollments. A current list of field representatives and their supervisors shall be available; the address of each field representative shall be available through the usual reference sources such as the telephone book, the local credit bureau and bank. A school under indictment by a State or Federal governmental agency for any deviation from good ethical practice shall not be accredited until cleared of all charges.

IX. Financial Responsibility

1. Financial Responsibility

The school can show, by financial statement, that it is financially responsible and that it can meet its financial obligations to provide service to its students.

2. Demonstrated Operation

The school can show five years of sound and ethical operation. Schools which are branches of affiliates of established schools may be accredited after fewer than five years of operation.

X. Tuition Policies

1. Reasonable Tuition

The amount of tuition charges is reasonable in light of the educational services rendered and the school's operating costs.

2. Tuition Collection Procedures

Tuition collection practices and procedures are fair. They encourage the progress of students and seek to retain their good will. The right to protect its financial interests is inherent with any accredited school. Its tuition collection practices are in keeping with sound ethical business standards.

3. Tuition Refund Policies

The school recognizes that there are legitimate reasons why an enrolled student may not be able to complete his training with benefit to himself. Accordingly, the school has a policy for equitable tuition adjustment in such cases. Records should be maintained on tuition refunds and enrollment cancellations to provide a reference source for management analysis.

XI. Plant and Equipment

1. Plant and Equipment

The building, workspace, and equipment comply with the local fire, building, health and safety requirements and are adequately equipped to handle the educational program of the institution.

2. Record Protection

Educational records of all students are maintained in a safe, fireproof, and reasonably accessible place as long as they are likely to be needed. Other records are maintained in accordance with current educational, administrative, business and legal practice.

XII. Research and Self-Improvement

1. Research and Self-Improvement Studies

An accredited school shows evidence of progressiveness and of effort to improve operating efficiency and service. Sound research procedures and techniques are used to measure how effectively the announced course objectives are being met.

2. Revision Practices

Effective procedures are utilized to constantly improve materials and keep them current and up-to-date.

3. Professional Growth

Interest in improving the course of instruction and in the upgrading of personnel and faculty is demonstrated through membership in professional associations, review and application of research, and practical experience in the general field of education and the specific field of home study.

4. Self-Study Program

An accredited school has an established program or plan reflecting a desire to improve its services to the student and to provide for the growth of the school and its staff and faculty.

Document 3.1.1

ACCREDITING COMMISSION
National Home Study Council

RATING FORM FOR EXAMINERS AND SUBJECT SPECIALIST REVIEWERS

The items listed below reflect school characteristics of basic importance to the Commission as described in the "Standards for Accrediting Home Study Schools", Document 3.1. Please refer to Document 3.1 for descriptions of the standards. Along with each major rating item, questions have been added which may help the examiner or subject course reviewer; in some instances these questions may assist in questioning school personnel or in reviewing their course materials. The school should be rated on each characteristic as follows:

O - Outstanding

S - Satisfactory

U - Unsatisfactory, less than a minimum standard.

Ratings, especially O and U ratings, should be explained in detail by attaching constructive comments and specific illustrations so that the findings can be relayed to the school in a helpful manner.

Examiners and subject reviewers are not limited by this guide and are encouraged to explore any related characteristics and activities. Certain of the listed characteristics are of special importance to each individual examiner and subject specialist. The following code indicates these:

(1) Research and Educational Examiners should use all of Sections I through VII and Section XII

(2) Subject Specialists should use all of Sections I and II and Section III, 1. Subject Specialists who accompany the Examining Team should also use Sections III, IV, V, and VI.

(3) Business Standards Examiners should use all of Sections VII through XII.

I. Educational Objectives (1) (2) Rating (O, S, or U) _____

1. Description of Objectives _____

Do the statements of objectives:

indicate for whom the instruction is intended, e.g., inexperienced people wishing to enter a field; employed people desiring upgrading; experienced people needing re-training; people needing a refresher course; and what background is presupposed?

indicate the kind of training offered, e.g., in-service, job-related theory; practice of skills; theory and practice; academic or general education?

indicate expected outcomes, e.g., the degree of competence gained, skill, working knowledge or familiarization; the knowledge of a field -- know-how; preparation for occupational licensing examinations; appreciations and understandings; a standard diploma; preparation for a specific occupation -- at what level?

2. Appropriate Objectives _____

Are the objectives clear; are the objectives specific; what background is presupposed in terms of experience, age, education, and physical requirements or limitations? Can the objectives be accomplished by correspondence study or correspondence study combined with required and stipulated resident training?

II. Educational Materials (1) (2)

1. Comprehensive Instructional Materials _____

Is there complete coverage of the material indicated by the title? Does content coverage appear thorough enough to meet stated objectives?

2. Up-to-date Instructional Materials _____

Is instructional material up-to-date? (Consider revision, editing, writing, and printing time). Is instructional material accurate? (Consider latest developments as related to contents).

3. Authorship _____

Does the material reflect information and the degree of professionalism attributable to knowledgeable authors?

4. Reading Level _____

Is the reading level correct? (Consider content, student); what is your estimate of the reading level? Is material subdivided into chapters, units of instruction, or sections that are satisfactory and logical units of instruction?

5. Study Instructions _____

Did you find "how-to-study", and course procedures and instructions to students in the course? Are these instructions to students properly placed in the course? Are instructions to students complete, leaving no doubt in the student's mind as to correct school administrative, study, and examination procedures? Are the instructions clearly written and easy to understand? Are the instructions adequately illustrated? Does motivation appear to have been adequately considered in writing and organizing the text and in the supplementary materials?

6. Organization of Instructional Materials _____

Is the organization of the total course such as to assist in student understanding? Is each unit generally organized in an "easy to learn" order? Is there any "backtracking" made necessary by illogical arrangement of printed parts of the program which might be confusing to the student?

7. Teaching Devices _____

Are necessary and desirable teaching devices used? Are the teaching devices used pertinent and practical?

8. Illustrations

Is the reproduction process used for illustrations appropriate and satisfactory? Are the illustrations well-chosen and adequate for the purpose intended?

9. Printing and Binding

Is the format attractive and functional? Does the format make it easy to comprehend the overall organization of the course? Is each printed piece clearly titled, thus easily identifiable? Is the format consistent and does it enhance the recognition of successive instructional units? Does the binding method used appear to be appropriate for the type of course? Should consideration be given to another method of reproduction? Are the column width, type, size and spacing appropriate for the content?

III. Educational Services (1) (2)*

1. Examination Service

Is the type of test - essay, objective, case study, performance (do it), comprehensive (combination of two or more of the preceding types), and/or commercially available tests - well adapted to the instructional material? Are the test items well constructed? Does the testing program cover the instructional material? Is it possible for a student to pass the tests with very little or no study of the instructional material? Does the quality of the examination items justify the time spent in studying? Is the number of exams sufficient to cover the instructional material? Does the testing program attempt to teach as well as test? Are test directions understandable?

2. Resident Courses

Is terminal training provided when it is required? Does the school operate its own resident training facilities? Are adequate equipment, faculty and facilities available? Is adequate student housing available? Does the enrollment agreement clearly explain the conditions and cost of the required course?

3. Handling Student Inquiries

Does the school have a planned program for efficient and prompt handling of student inquiries? Does the school encourage inquiries from students? Does the school employ competent personnel to handle inquiries, especially those of a technical nature?

4. Individual Differences

Does the school have competent personnel to provide guidance and counsel individual students with personal and professional problems? Is there a file available to reflect this service?

5. Handling Failures

Are there any failures? What is the school's policy and procedure for handling failures? What encouragement is given to failing students?

---

* Subject Specialists who are members of the visiting examining team should apply this entire section, others apply Section III, 1.

6. Encouragement of Students _____

What special efforts are made by the school to motivate students? Can you find specific instances of the materials, letters, and actions by the school to encourage students to start, continue and succeed in their studies?

7. Student Evaluation of Courses _____

Is there any provision for using student comments and problems for the continuing evaluation of the course? Is there a "revision of course file" consolidating printing and contents errors based upon the course experience, with both student and faculty comments? Does the school use end-of-course critique forms to be completed by the graduates?

IV. Student Services (1) (2)*

1. Grading of Examinations _____

Is the time required for the grading and return of examinations reasonable? Are student questions and problems answered thoroughly and accurately? Are references and explanatory notes provided for incorrect examination questions?

2. Student Records and Materials _____

How efficient and effective are the student academic record and transcript services? Are essential student records adequately maintained? For how long? Are instructor's comments and counseling advice recorded in student records? Are ample study materials provided at all times?

3. Counseling and Employment Assistance _____

Is there a warm and continuing faculty-student correspondence and guidance program? Is employment assistance offered? How effective is it? Does the school provide special services to alumni? What indication is there of the effectiveness of such service?

V. Student Success and Satisfaction (1) (2)*

1. Student Success and Satisfaction _____

Is there ample evidence of student success and satisfaction? Have students expressed their satisfaction with both the course materials and educational services? Does the school maintain a complaint file? How does the school handle complaints from Federal, State, and local authorities?.....from students? Have they had, or do they now have any court cases or serious complaints?

2. Progress Through the Course _____

Are the non-start, drop-out and completion rates satisfactory in the light of the nature of the course and the student body? How good is the placement record (when placement assistance is available)?

---

* Subject Specialists who are members of the visiting examining team should apply this entire section.

VI. Qualifications of Faculty (1) (2)*

1. Educational Director _____

Is the Educational Director or academic head qualified both educationally and technically (professionally) for the position? Is he responsible for the educational program? Does he assist in policy development for advertising, sales, and collections?

2. Department Heads _____

If there are department heads, are they qualified? What are their educational, editorial and research responsibilities?

3. Instructors _____

Are instructors experienced and qualified? Are there an adequate number of instructors? Is each student provided individualized instructional service?

VII. Admission Practices and Enrollment Agreements (1) (3)

1. Admission Practices _____

What is the relationship and responsibility of the educational director or the academic department in the screening and enrollment process? Does the academic department play any role in the establishing of enrollment standards and criteria, and in the acceptance and rejection of prospective enrollees? Have minimum criteria for enrollment been established? Are these documented? Did you see a file of rejections - or could the school document the fact that students are rejected or placed "on-trial" etc. based on the established criteria? Does a sample of 50 or 100 completed enrollment agreements in the files indicate or tally out essential variables such as age, educational level, pay plan selected, etc.?

2. Enrollment Agreements _____

Is every detail of each enrollment agreement clear and specific as to obligations of the school, services included, obligations and privileges of the student, address of the school, etc.? Is a copy of the enrollment agreement left with the student? When? Is adequate supplementary information left with the student?

VIII. Advertising and Promotion (3)

1. Advertising and Promotion _____

What follow-up is made on leads? Does promotional matter make only clear and provable statements fully within the spirit of the Trade Practice Rules of the FTC? Does promotional copy contain unjustified superlatives or cast reflection on competing schools? Is there any confusion about the address of the home office and the actual name of the school?

---

* Subject Specialists who are members of the visiting examining team.

2. Control of Field Staff

How are agents recruited? screened? selected? How are new field representatives trained? What is the compensation plan for field representatives? Is their working relationship clearly spelled out in a contract or letter agreement? Do they retain or lose their rights to future commissions paid after they sever relationships with the school? How are the field representatives supervised? How many field representatives does each supervisor handle? Does the supervisor enroll (accept or reject) students on his own account? How close is the relationships between agents and supervisor? What is the tenure pattern? Turnover rate (especially with new employees)? How are complaints arising from field representatives handled. What percentage of the field representatives earn enough to make a living with this school? Did you inspect records of compensation, turnover, supervisory ratio, handling of complaints arising from agents, discharge, etc.?

IX. Financial Responsibility (3)

1. Financial Responsibility

Does the school demonstrate long term financial responsibility? Are the fiscal policies and procedures sound? Is the student contract protected? Is there a balanced budgetary expenditure between educational activities, including materials and student-faculty services, and the other administrative-advertising requirements?

2. Demonstrated Operation

Has the school demonstrated sound financial responsibility for the preceding five years? If a recently established branch or affiliate of an established school, does the financial record of the parent school reflect at least five years of sound, ethical operation?

X. Tuition Policies (3)

1. Reasonable Tuition

Is the tuition too high or too low for the educational publications, course materials and services? What is the relationship between tuition cost and the cost of educational materials and services, and administrative, advertising and other operating costs?

2. Tuition Collection Procedures

Do collection practices encourage the student to proceed with the course? What percent of the face value of the enrollment agreements do the "normal" (non-pressure) collection methods bring in? What additional percentage is brought in through extraordinary methods? What percent of all accounts are sent to outside collection agencies? to inside attorneys? to outside attorneys? to "house" collection agencies? What percent of the value of these eventually accrues to school?

3. Tuition Refund Policies

What are the procedures and policies applicable to students who want to drop out? If a cancellation plan is in use, what percent of all students take advantage of it? Are tuition refund and cancellation policies documented and familiar to school officials? Have you spot checked a sample of 50 or 100 student accounts to see how many paid in full, how many were cancelled at various points in the procedures applicable to

delinquents, etc.? Does the school have a file to show cancellations and refunds or any means of documenting their refund and cancellation policies? What reasons does the school recognize for cancelling further payments? Under what circumstances does the school make refunds to students who have paid beyond their progress in the course?

XI. Plant and Equipment (3)

1. Plant and Equipment _____

Is the condition and amount of workspace satisfactory? hygienic? safe? Are the working conditions good?

2. Record Protection _____

Are the workflow and office systems efficient? How long are student educational records kept after the course has been finished? How long are financial records kept? Are financial and student records kept in fireproof or fire resistent places? To what extent do they offer a fire hazard when in use? What records are maintained permanently? How accessible are old or "dead" educational records?

XII. Research and Self-Improvement (1) (3)

1. Research and Self-Improvement Studies _____

What evidence is available to show that the school is aware of the need for research? What internal studies of its own operation has the school made? Have sound procedures been followed in conducting research studies? What analytical studies of its students has the school made in terms of their progress, characteristics, background, etc.? What analysis of the potential of its field of service has the school made?

2. Revision Practices _____

What research has the school done to show the degree to which the course is achieving its announced objectives in terms of student accomplishment? What sort of plan and procedure does the school use to provide information leading to course revision?

3. Professional Growth _____

Has the school demonstrated any interest and activity in professional organizations of related interest and objectives?

4. Self-Study Program _____

Does the school have a well conceived program in mind (and on paper) for its future growth, development and improvement?

Document 3.1.1

RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONSTRUCTIVE CRITICISM

The commentary you make here should be of a critical but also a constructive nature. Whatever help, advice, suggestions and ideas you can provide should be directed towards helping the school meet Accrediting Commission standards. Be specific and realistic in your comments. Please key by paragraph number your comments to the applicable sections of this form. Use extra sheets if necessary. Subject Specialists who may not accompany the Examining Committee into the school should list additional questions to be raised by the Subject Specialist member of the team when he visits the school.

_____
Name of School

_____*
Examiner or Subject Specialist*

_____

_____
Address

_____
Date

_____
*
Subject Specialists who have printed resumes of their background, history and experience are requested to attach these to this evaluation. If resumes are not available, a description of your present position and qualifications is requested.

RA/9/61

Document 4.1

ACCREDITING COMMISSION
National Home Study Council

GUIDE TO SELF-EVALUATION

The Commission has two purposes in asking institutions to make a Self-Evaluation before an Examining Committee visit: (1) to help the institution make a critical self-examination, which the Commission believes is of primary importance; and (2) to obtain information which the Examining Committee will need in preparation for and during their visit, and which the Accrediting Commission will need for its background study of the school.

This Guide to Self-Evaluation consists primarily of a list of questions. The Commission expects complete and, wherever practical, documented answers to each applicable question. It expects the institution to feel free, however, to make such modifications in the questions and to supply such additional information as will most adequately describe its particular operations. In the past, applicants have typically used from 16 to 40 single-spaced pages to answer their questions. Supporting exhibits and documents may be interwoven in the report or identified with appropriate questions and put into an appendix.

In preparing the Self-Evaluation Report, the writer should copy each question, numbered as in this Guide, and write the institutional answer below it. Supportive statistical data and substantiating statements should be given whenever possible.

Use standard 8-1/2 x 11" paper. Number the pages of the Report consecutively, beginning with page 1, with a table of contents and a title page like the sample shown here.

To guard against loss, the pages may be stapled, bound, inserted in a three-ring notebook, or held together in any better way than by a paper clip. Copies of the Report may be duplicated by mimeograph or any other legible process.

The Commission will need 15 copies of the Report. As soon as ready, all 15 copies should be sent to the Secretary. Certain copies will go to members of the Examining Committee and returned for reuse. Later, each member of the Commission will receive one.

Two months should be allowed between receipt of the Report in the Secretary's office and the expected visit of the Examining Committee.

(Sample title page)

Self-Evaluation Report

Data presented for consideration of the Accrediting Commission of the National Home Study Council.

by

(Name of institution)
(Address of institution)

The data submitted herewith are certified correct to the best of my knowledge and belief.

(Name and title of reporting officer)
(Date)

Document 4.1

QUESTIONS

I. Organization

1. History. When was the institution founded? Trace a brief history of the institution showing changes of name, creation of new divisions, and major changes in ownership and management. (Need not duplicate item 46.)

2. What is the legal form of the institution? (Stock corporation, partnership, proprietorship, non-profit corporation, or what?)

3. Who controls the institution? If the institution is a stock corporation, list the name and addresses of any persons or organizations owning 10% or more of the voting stock.

4. Supply an organizational chart of the school showing the relationships among its component parts, and the responsibilities and relationships of the governing board, administrative officers, instructional staffs, important committees, advisory boards, etc. Identify by name the incumbent of each supervisory or administrative position.

5. Is your institution licensed or approved by any local, state, or other governmental agency? Is your institution approved or accredited by any non-governmental agency? If so, list them and give dates of first approval. Have you ever been denied approval or had approval withdrawn? If so, give the details.

II. Educational Objectives

6. State the educational objectives of each major course (or group of courses) offered by the school. These objectives should make clear what the educational program can do for reasonably diligent students. Indicate the kind of training offered, for whom the instruction is intended, and the expected outcome.

7. State the relationship between institutional objectives and the needs of the public served, i.e. What social service is being performed? How badly is training needed in this area?

8. Fill out this table for each of your major courses.

Name of course	Number of exams in it	Total clock hours your typical enrollee must spend to complete course	Months normally required to complete course	Number of new students enrolled in course last year

III. Educational Materials and Services

NOTE: As soon as the Self-Evaluation is started, the school should send two (2) complete sets of the instructional materials to the Secretary of the Accrediting Commission who will arrange for an adequate subject-matter review. (Accredited schools undergoing the five year re-examination need send only new courses and/or courses which have undergone major revisions.) Where the course includes bulky kits of equipment, tools, or other special items, the school should describe the situation to the Secretary before sending the material.

(If supplementary guides, practical exercises and special examinations describe the equipment in the kits sufficiently, it may not be necessary to forward the kits.) Likewise schools using standard texts should notify the Secretary in advance.

9. Describe briefly the history and policies and procedures of the institution in originating its course or courses.

10. Describe your instructional materials from the following standpoint:

    A. Comprehensiveness. How do you know that your courses are sufficiently comprehensive to achieve their announced objectives?

    B. Currency and Accuracy. Are the instructional materials up-to-date? Accurate? How do you keep your course content up-to-date?

    C. Authorship. Name the author or authors and give their qualifications and experience in their fields. If standard textbooks are used, list titles, authors, publishers, and copyright dates.

    D. Reading Level. How do you know that the reading level of your instructional materials are keyed to the reading competence of your average enrollee? Have you made any readability tests or checks of your courses? If so, with what results?

    E. Study Instructions. What methods do you employ to instruct the student in how to proceed, how to study, and how to learn effectively?

    F. Organization. Show how the organization and presentation of your instructional materials are in accord with sound psychological principals of learning.

    G. Teaching Devices. Describe any supplemental teaching devices you use, such as study guides, outlines, films, sound recordings, kits, special equipment, etc.

    H. Illustration. Indicate types and use of illustrations for educational and inspirational value.

    I. Printing and Binding. Describe the reproduction process used, binding, and general layout of your instructional materials.

11. What relationships do you maintain with the occupational or educational fields covered by your courses? Are these relationships maintained for course revision, graduate placement, faculty growth, or public relations purposes?

12. Does resident instruction supplement the home study instruction? If so, describe the resident program.

13. What type of examinations are used (type of items)? To what extent do your examinations adequately demonstrate achievement of the instructional objectives? In what ways do examinations provide for significant learning experiences. Describe how the instructional staff evaluates, corrects, and grades examinations. How do instructors provide additional instructional and counseling services?

14. What is the process for the handling of students' inquiries?

15. What provisions do you make for students with poor comprehension? Rapid learners?

16. What do you do when students fail to do satisfactory work on an assignment? On the course?

17. Explain your program of encouraging your students to start, continue, and finish the course in which they have enrolled.

18. How do you utilize the reactions of students to effect changes in the educational materials and services? What systematic methods are used to make instructional materials easier to learn?

IV. Qualifications of Faculty

19. Give the name (and position) of the educational director, and all instructional department heads, instructors, editors, technical consultants, etc. For each indicate the (a) amount of weekly service rendered, (b) extent of formal education, (c) special training, (d) experience qualifying him for the position, (e) professional education courses or degrees completed, (f) training in correspondence education, and (g) activity in trade and professional associations, labor unions, and professional writing,(need not duplicate parts of item 11 and item 49).

V. Student Services

20. Describe the basis upon which instructional materials are supplied to the student. Do students who pay for the course receive all instructional materials even though they fail to submit examinations?

21. What student records are kept? Submit a sample educational record form.

22. What kinds of counseling are provided? At what stages is counseling given? By whom?

23. Does the school offer employment assistance? If so, describe this service in detail. What results are obtained?

24. Present exhibits of certificates, diplomas, and degrees awarded. Under what authority are they given?

25. To what extent are your diplomas, certificates, and degrees accepted by other educational institutions, licensing bodies, and employers?

VI. Student Success and Satisfaction

26. What evidence have you that a high proportion of your students is satisfied with the courses in which they enroll? What proportion of your students or graduates get advancement or new jobs as a result of your instruction and service? Describe any follow-up of graduates you may make. Please attach a digest of results of any follow-up studies made recently.

27. Select a random sample of student records for each major course and show student progress in accord with procedures set forth in Document 4.1.1.

28. List all legal cases and suits initiated by students during the last five years and indicate briefly the cause and the disposition.

VII. Admission Practices and Enrollment Agreements

29. Describe the steps in the enrollment of the typical student. What major variations are there to these steps? Who determines acceptance standards and who determines final acceptance in marginal cases? How many students were rejected or were disenrolled after the first few lessons upon recommendation of the school during the twelve months preceding this report or during any period conveniently described by your records?

30. Supply copies of your enrollment agreements. Is a copy left with each student?

31. What are the enrollment requirements for students with respect to age, education, health, occupation, experience, appearance, employability, etc. If a specific education level is required, how is it determined?

32. Does any form of governmental licensing apply directly or indirectly to the particular vocational area or areas you serve? If so, explain the policies and procedures of your institution which relate to such licensing.

VIII. Advertising, Promotion, and Sales

33. Describe the advertising and promotion programs of the institution.

34. Supply copies of all printed advertisements, radio and TV continuities, and mailing pieces now in use to invite inquiries from prospective students.

35. Supply copies of any institutional advertising materials in use to inform particular occupational groups, enployers, other educational institutions, or the general public, of the services you offer.

36. Supply copies of all sales letters, printed materials, and catalogs mailed or delivered to prospective students.

37. Do you employ field representatives? If so, state how you recruit, select, train, supervise, and terminate the employment of field representatives. Supply copies of standard agreements with field agents and compensation arrangements with agents. Supply also copies of recruiting ads, application forms, rating scales, and bond forms used. Supply list of current field organization, with names of field representatives, regional offices, their local addresses and their territory.

38. Supply copies of instructions and sales manuals to field representatives and duplicated letters and bulletins furnished for their guidance.

39. Have you had any Federal Trade Commission action over the past five years, or any state initiated complaint or action during this same period? If so, give dates, cause, and final disposition.

IX. Financial Responsibility

40. Submit copies of the institution's annual financial report for the last three fiscal years showing assets and liabilities, and a profit and loss statement. Is there an annual audit by an outside firm of certified public accountants?

Attach a summary of your salary schedules (minimum and maximum) for the following categories:

A. Top school executives.

B. Administrative and Business staff.

C. Educational Director and Faculty.

D. Part time Instructor (per exam or per hour).

How much money was spent last year in the research and development of new or revised course materials, student printed materials and publications and student services?

41. What is the extent and allocation of insurance coverage?

X. Tuition Policies

42. List the courses you offer and their prices under various payment plans.

43. Describe in detail your policies and procedures for the collection of tuition. Present data on the volume of accounts that reach successive stages of action. What results are obtained with each successive step? Supply a complete set of statements and tuition-payment letters.

44. Describe the policies and procedures used in the settlement of student accounts in cases (a) where there are legitimate reasons why the enrolled student may not be able to complete the course with benefit to himself, and (b) where the student has changed his mind and wants to drop the course. Under what circumstances, and for what reasons do you allow a refund of tuition?

45. Do you offer scholarships of any kind? If so, who is eligible? What is the source of the money? Who makes the selection of recipients? How many scholarships were granted during the last calendar year and what is the total value of these scholarships?

XI. Plant and Equipment

46. Describe the workspace occupied by your school. Indicate the floor areas, type of construction, and compliance with local fire, building, health and safety requirements. What major pieces of equipment (and record systems) have you to aid in the provision of the educational service?

47. What are the procedures used by the institution for the maintenance of student and graduate records? Indicate the length of time records are kept, the type of equipment used, the degree of fire-protection afforded, etc.

XII. Research and Self-Improvement

48. What is the history of major changes in your institution with respect to new courses offered, established courses improved, the addition of student services, the raising of entrance or completion standards, the addition of new educational personnel, the improvement of sales, promotion, or collection procedures, etc. How did each change come about?

49. What internal or operating research and quality controls are carried on systematically? Submit any material or data you may wish which gives evidence of present efforts to extend or improve the services conducted by your institution. Have you applied any new ideas and practices recently that have been a result of your membership and activity in professional organizations?

50. What problems has this Self-Evaluation helped you to identify? What do you consider to be the major problems faced by your school. What plans have you for solving those problems?

51. After going through the Self-Evaluation, what suggestions have you for the improvement of the process? What additional questions should be added to help present the merits of your organization?

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52. When the Accrediting Commission is through with the copies of the Self-Evaluation Report, do you want them (a) returned to you or (b) destroyed?

Document 5.1

ACCREDITING COMMISSION
National Home Study Council

REQUEST FOR EXAMINING COMMITTEE VISIT
(Submit one copy and keep a carbon)

_____
(Date)

To: Executive Secretary
Accrediting Commission
National Home Study Council
2000 K St., N. W.
Washington 6, D. C.

Under separate cover we are sending you 15 copies of our Self-Evaluation Report together with a copy of all materials requested in the Guide to Self-Evaluation.

We will be ready for a visit by an Examining Committee on or around the following dates: (Please suggest dates at least six weeks and preferably two or three months in advance of the expected visit.)

We expect to have confirmation of suitable dates at least four weeks in advance of the visit.

Sincerely yours,

_____
Institution Head

_____
School

_____
Address

_____

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Document 4.1.1

ACCREDITING COMMISSION
National Home Study Council

INSTRUCTIONS FOR STUDIES OF STUDENT PROGRESS

Item 27 in the Guide to Self-Evaluation can be restated as follows:

In answer to item 27, the school should present data from an adequate statistical study or sampling of student records which shows:

a. the number of enrollments in the sample
b. the percent completing the first assignment
c. the number completing through several specific points in the course
d. the average number of assignments completed
e. the percent of students completing the course

Do this for each of your major courses.

In regard to d above, in order to plot the graph called for on page 3, we suggest calculating how many finish successfully each successive tenth part of the course, e.g. how many sent in the first 10% of the total examinations in the course, 20%, 30%, etc. Other breaks may be more convenient in your course. Data should enable you to plot a graph somewhat similar to the one shown later in this document.

Suggested Method of Deriving Data by Use of Sampling

Size and selection of sample: No fixed size of sample is suggested. Medium and larger schools may want to use 1,000 or more while smaller schools may have to drop to smaller samples or even to a complete count. Care should be taken not to let the sample become selective. In an alphabetical or numerical list, to arrive at the desired sample one might need to take every fifth, tenth, or fortieth name falling in the required enrollment period. Small samples of 500 or even fewer may be acceptable provided they were drawn on a truly random basis and the percent of error recognized.

One should include only students who enrolled long enough ago to have had a reasonable chance of completing the course. If the course has changed little recently, include only students who have been enrolled for the entire period normally allowed to finish the course. If material changes have been made, one can select a period of enrollment sufficiently far back to embrace at least 80% of those who are going to finish (i.e., if 80% usually finish within 18 months, one can select from those who enrolled during a period prior to 18 months ago).

Tallying and Calculation: After the sample has been drawn, one needs to tally how many assignments have been finished (usually how many examinations have been sent in) and have received passing grades. The tally for a sample of 1,000 students in a ten-assignment course might look like this:

Document 4.1.1

		Number of Students Progressing this far	Total Number of Exams sent in
Non-starts	---------	80	0
Credit for (but not 2)	1 Exam	130	130
	2 Exams	110	220
	3 Exams	103	309
	4 Exams	84	336
	5 Exams	65	325
	6 Exams	38	228
	7 Exams	16	112
	8 Exams	13	104
	9 Exams	14	126
	10 Exams	347	3,470
		1,000	5,360

In the sample 92.0% of the students (all but 80 of the 1,000) completed the first assignment.

If all enrolled students in the sample had done 100% of their work, 10,000 examinations would have been sent in. Instead, 5,360 were received. The typical or average enrollee went 53.6% of the way through the course. This is the completion rate of the course. (This definition was promulgated by the National Home Study Council's Research and Educational Standards Committee and issued in the NHSC LETTER of April 16, 1955.) This probably is the best single index of student progress. It can be a basis of comparison within the school as improvements are made from time to time. Many of the injustices of interschool comparison, however, are obvious.

In the sample, 34.7% of the students completed the course. (i.e., They did all the home studying required regardless of whether or not they took any "final examination", supervised examination, entered upon terminal resident training, qualified for certificates, or a diploma, etc. This figure should reveal what percent of the students finished the home study part of the course. If this figure includes resident study also, it should so specify. Where resident terminal training is offered, it is of interest to know what percent of the sample start and what percent of finish the resident portion of the course.)

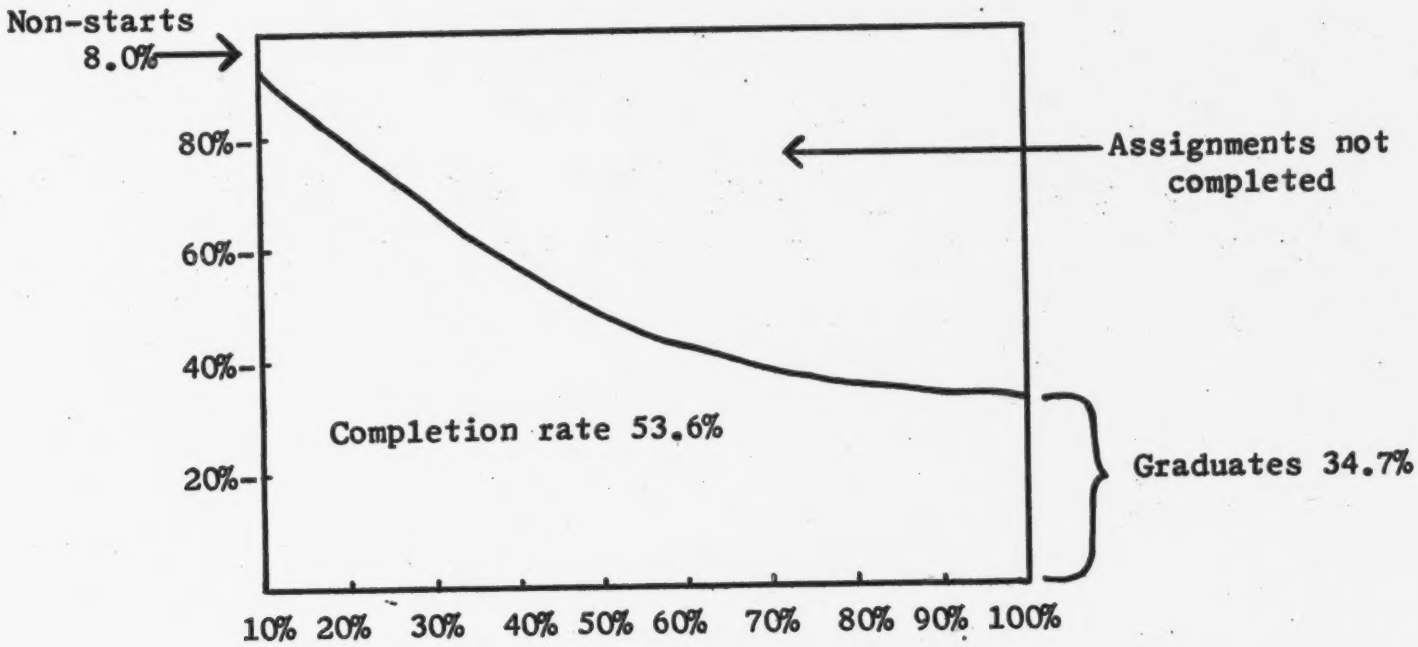
NOTE: The same base (a) is used for (b), (c), (d), and (e).

> An enrolled student is one who has made the required tuition down payment, has been accepted, and has been sent his first instructional materials.

Similar studies should be made and reported for each different major course of field, e.g., high school, chemical engineering, accounting, traffic management, factory management.

STUDENT PROGRESS GRAPH

For each major course, prepare a line graph similar to the following showing student activity. The graph below shows the student progress of the example on the opposite page. The graph closely approximates the actual record of one accredited school.



Ten exams in course. Sample of 1000 students.

Interpretation:

8.0% non-starts
92.0% sent in first exam (starting rate)(also finished 1/10 of course)
79.0% finished 2/10 of course
68.0% finished 3/10 of course
57.7% finished 4/10 of course
49.3% finished 5/10 of course
42.8% finished 6/10 of course
39.0% finished 7/10 of course
37.4% finished 8/10 of course
36.1% finished 9/10 of course
34.7% finished entire course

Average percent of assignments completed: 53.6%.
(This is the completion rate obtained from a tabulation of exams sent in by all students in the sample.)

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Document 6.1

ACCREDITING COMMISSION
National Home Study Council

RESPONSIBILITIES OF MEMBERS OF EXAMINING COMMITTEES

Objectives of the Examining Committee

The Examining Committee visit is always made after the school has gone through an intensive Self-Evaluation. The visit constitutes the second major phase of the total evaluation process. Its purpose is twofold:

1. To stimulate an institution toward further growth and development. In this stimulation the Committee visit is important in three ways.

   a. The pending arrival of a competent Examining Committee should motivate critical self-analysis, stimulate alertness, and heighten professional tone throughout the staff.

   b. The raising of questions and exchange of information and viewpoints in interviews and conferences with staff members potentially leaves a residue of new ideas, encouragement, and confidence.

   c. After the Committee leaves, an open-minded school staff will reassess its work and consider application of new ideas which may result in material improvement in the quality and effectiveness of its program.

2. To gather and verify additional data through first-hand observation. For this purpose Committee members will observe intangibles which may not be apparent in written reports, examine records, make spot checks and sample tests and inquire into matters which may have been overlooked in the Self-Evaluation. The data gathered for the Accrediting Commission is to supplement that which appears in the Self-Evaluation Report.

Responsibilities of Chairmen

1. To arrange a work schedule for the visit and inform the Examining Committee members of it in advance.

2. To orient the Committee at its initial meeting and to call such other Committee meetings as may be necessary.

3. To make and change Committee assignments as necessary to ensure adequate coverage and to equalize their work loads.

4. To be spokesman for the Committee during the institutional visit.

5. To assign responsibilities and deadlines for drafting the Committee Report.

6. To prepare the Examining Committee Report, prepare a short summary or recapitulation of it, and to forward the complete Report with summary to the Secretary within three weeks after the visit.

7. To be present on request at the next Commission meeting to present the Committee Report or to answer further questions about the institution.

Document 6,1

Responsibilities of Examining Committee Members

1. To study in advance of the visit the instructions to Committee members and other documents sent out by the Commission.

2. To study the Self-Evaluation Report prepared by the school to be visited.

3. To formulate tentative questions they might ask appropriate people on their visit to the school.

4. To prepare their assigned portions of the report of their visit and forward them to the chairman by the time agreed upon.

5. To keep confidential all information obtained on the visit in both the Self-Evaluation Report and the Committee Report.

Responsibilities of the Secretary of the Accrediting Commission

1. To arrange specific dates for the visit of the Examining Committee with the head of the institution being visited.

2. To arrange for housing and meals of the Examining Committee.

3. To make cooperative arrangements with any specialized agencies concerned with a joint or reciprocal evaluation.

4. To select and announce the Examining Committee under policies and procedures approved by the Accrediting Commission.

5. To send appropriate instructions and background documents to Committee members.

6. To receive the institution's Self-Evaluation Reports and distribute them to the Committee members.

7. To receive expense accounts of the Committee and to reimburse them.

8. To receive the Committee Report from the chairman, reproduce it, and distribute copies to the Accrediting Commission, and to the Examining Committee.

9. To notify the school of the action taken by the Accrediting Commission, to include constructive and specific suggestions and findings.

Teamwork

The Examining Committee should plan to work as a team under the direction of the chairman. Each member of the team is selected with regard for the specialized contribution he can make to it. It follows that assignments of Committee members will differ somewhat. However, each member will need to take advantage of the observations made and the leads developed by his teammates. Conversely, each will share information as needed to develop a unified picture of the school being visited.

Committee members and chairmen serve as responsible agents of the Accrediting Commission of the National Home Study Council and work within the framework and regulations established by the Commission.

Document 6.1

Attitudes and Approaches

The visit of the Examining Committee should be an educational experience for both the staff being visited and the visitors. The whole attitude needs to be one of mutual confidence and concern with the problems of the school. The visit is not an investigation even though many facets of the school's operation are carefully examined. No assumption of weakness or unworthiness is made.

The primary relationship might be characterized as one of "thinking together." Both local staff and visitors are interested in developing better solutions to their problems. Visitors often have a perspective different from that of the local staff who find it easy to see the trees instead of the forest.

From the experience in their own schools and from visits to other schools, visitors can raise questions both to elicit information and to stimulate thinking. Committeemen may find it useful to formulate in advance questions designed to get at the heart of the matter or to open up other points of view. They must not expect to find all schools operating alike. A committeeman's own bias should not be imposed on the school he visits.

Committeemen are expected not to ask for a repetition of the information presented in the Self-Evaluation Report with which they are presumed to be familiar. However, they may ask for further data or an interpretation of them. Personal examination of a sample of records, systematic sampling studies to verify points in the report, and spot checks are in order.

Insofar as possible some members of the Examining Committee should confer with every staff member in a position of responsibility above the purely routine level. The value of thorough coverage, either on an individual or small group basis, cannot be overestimated. Persons previously involved in the institutional self-study have built up expectations. If they are ignored, the Committee, by lack of attention and thoroughness, is missing an opportunity to reward them for the work they have done and to stimulate them to further achievement. The chairman should take pains to see that all who have been previously involved are included in the interviews, however short some may have to be.

Summary of Suggestions; An Approach to Evaluation

The following summary of suggestions for the Examining Committee members may be helpful. Upon examining and studying the printed exhibit materials and self-evaluation data look for:

a. the positive in fulfillment of stated objectives,

b. teaching techniques,

c. up-to-dateness of texts,

d. comprehensiveness of course coverage,

e. evidence of good, sound educational planning based upon self-study and practical research,

f. achieving of good results,

g. evidence of progress,

h. professionalism of staff,

i. educationally sound and businesslike enrollment procedures,

j. effective student services,

k. administrative efficiency; orderly and systematic procedures,

l. practical and sound record keeping methods,

m. individualized instruction,

n. adequacy of physical plant and equipment,

and other such qualities as are expected of an accredited school. These are points taken from Document 3.1, Standards for Accredited Home Study Schools.

How to get the information:

a. use Document 3.1.1 to be sure of comprehensive coverage of main points.

b. verify what you've read and have been told by questioning people, anyone -- kindly and to the point. All have been told why we're here and they're glad to cooperate. Ask to see exhibits, texts, exams, special handling or files showing acceptance and rejection of enrollment applications, disenrollment of students for non-qualification with fair refund policy applied, counseling of students and services to students as requested or required, counseling methods, forms, revision dates, statistics, and anything else you need to know to give a professional, evaluative, and helpful appraisal of these schools. In short, get all the information you need to write a complete report. You may open incoming and outgoing student examination and service requests to check actual grading and services. All student correspondence files, student grading and account cards should be available for inspection.

Confidential Information

All data, observations, conversations, findings and reports related both to the Self-Evaluation and the Committee visit are to be kept confidential. Committee members are particularly cautioned that (1) personal observations, (2) committee discussions, (3) the Self-Evaluation Report, and (4) the Committee Report are highly confidential and privileged communications. Information should not be divulged from any of these sources. Likewise materials should not be left where they may be read by others.

Committee members must remember that only the Accrediting Commission makes the decision about accreditation. No Committeeman is entitled to express an opinion as to the Commission's probably action.

Sequence of Activities During the Visit

Upon arrival in the location of the school being evaluated, the Committee members meet with the chairman in executive session for orientation. The group discusses the Self-Evaluation Report and agrees upon a plan of visitation. During this session the Committee develops its cohesion and some understanding of common norms.

Upon arrival at the school the Committee usually meets with the head of the school and such others in his administrative staff as he may select. A major purpose of this meeting is to provide for mutual acquaintance and agree upon a schedule and plan of procedure.

Committee members may make their visits as the chairman's judgment may dictate -- singly, in pairs, or as a group -- depending upon their experience and the size and complexity of the institution. Much of their interviewing will be with individuals. At times, especially in larger institutions, it may be wise to see small groups. Committee members may want to work from an outline, take generous notes, and assemble further information as aids in preparing their report later.

The chairman may wish to arrange at least one Committee meeting at or after the halfway point to permit consolidating notes, assessment of progress, and change of plans as may seem desirable. Late afternoons and evenings are good times for Committee meetings.

After the interviewing is finished, the Committee will want to meet in executive session to consolidate notes, discuss their observations, and agree upon their findings. They will want to indicate major strengths and weaknesses and develop major recommendations on which the Committee as a whole agrees. A time schedule for sending their reports to the Chairman will also be agreed upon.

The final stage in the Committee's visit is a brief conference between the chairman and the head of the institution. This is essentially a brief "thank you" meeting. The chairman may indicate to what extent the Committee had time to cover all phases of their plan and ask for any further information that the Committee should have. As this meeting almost invariably takes place before the Committee as a whole and its members individually have had opportunity to reflect upon their visit, the chairman will not be in a position to discuss findings except to clarify certain points of data. Recommendations, if any, will appear in the Examining Committee Report. As judgment in regard to accreditation is lodged in the Accrediting Commission, the chairman is not authorized to say anything implying an acceptance or rejection of the school by the Commission. At this meeting the chairman may invite comments from the school management. Committee members may accompany the chairman on this last visit if he thinks appropriate.

The Committee Report

The Committee Examining Visit and Report serves three purposes:

1. It enables the Accrediting Commission to understand and evaluate the institution seeking accreditation.

2. It helps the institution to see itself through the eyes of experienced, interested, yet detached colleagues during the examination visit.

3. It provides a permanent record and base line against which future evaluations of the institution can be reflected.

Every Committee Report Should Be:

1. Objective. The Examining Committee's first task is to assess the extent to which the institution is accomplishing its stated objectives. Personal philosophies of education, pre-conceived notions of the teachability of a field, and organization and administrative preferences should not be allowed to interfere with either the judgment or the writing.

2. Accurate and Consistent. The Report should be a factual statement of findings -- of conditions -- of the situation as observed. Unverified opinions and information should be omitted. The Report should be internally consistent. Discrepancies and and inaccurate statements reduce the institution's confidence in the Committee's work. The Report should contain no presumptive evidence or unsupported generalizations.

3. Clear. Every statement should be unmistakably clear and unambiguous both to the Commission and to the institution. Specific examples and illustrations must be given if the school is to take action upon recommendations.

4. Balanced. The chairman must see that the total Report covers all the major phases of the institution with appropriate attention to each. The review of each phase of the school's activities will afford constructive criticism of both the parts and the whole.

5. Constructive spirit. In contributing to the primary objectives of accreditation, the Committee must approach its task and write its Report sympathetically, must strive to obtain a meeting of the minds with the management of the institution, and prepare a report that will be genuinely helpful in encouraging growth and improvement. Even so, the Report should be searching and analytical. Any weaknesses that are apparent can be paralleled with suggestions for overcoming them insofar as the Committee's experience enables it to speak with reasonable confidence.

6. Succinct. While no rules on length are set up, ordinarily several pages will be required. The Report should (1) treat each significant item on the Guide to Self-Evaluation in enough detail to be useful to the school and Commission, and (2) be sufficiently condensed to avoid any appearance of wordiness. It might, but need not, follow the outline of major topics in the Guide. It should not repeat unnecessarily information contained in the Self-Evaluation Report, except as such data may be needed for documentation and illustration.

7. Accessible. Any report running longer than 8 pages probably should be indexed.

8. Submitted on time. Two typewritten copies of the Committee Report should be in the office of the Commission within three weeks after the visit.

Method of Preparation

Immediately at the end of the visit and before leaving the city, the committee will reach agreement on the findings and establish the position it wants to take on each major topic. The chairman will assign specific parts of the Report to be written by Committee members. Each member of the committee should forward one copy of his section to the chairman by the time agreed upon, with a carbon to the Executive Secretary of the Accrediting Commission, NHSC. Inasmuch as report writing can best be done while the visit is still freshly in mind, Committee members should strive to prepare their sections immediately.

The chairman will rewrite, edit, eliminate duplication, integrate the parts, and prepare the final Report. The chairman has final responsibility for content. Examining Committee members are not free to release any information from the Report which is confidential.

The chairman will prepare a prefatory summary of the Report of one page. One effective summary may be a list of observed strengths and weaknesses of the school with page references for details within the Report.

The Report should not contain any recommendations regarding accreditation to the Commission. If such recommendations seem desirable, the chairman may state the viewpoint of the Examining Committee by letter to the Secretary.

The Examining Committee is dissolved when its Report has been sent to the Secretary of the Commission. The chairman is relieved of further responsibility after the Commission has acted upon the Report, unless the Commission asks him to undertake further duties.

After the Commission has received the Committee Report, correspondence with regard to it should be addressed only to the Secretary of the Commission.

Document 6.1

Writing the Report

Write 2 copies of your findings and conclusions. This can be a letter or a memo in paragraph 1, 2, 3, etc. form. Fill out the Rating Sheet, Document 3.1.1 as appropriate and applicable and attach your written comments. When writing your report be factual and specific, not general. Spell out any "minus" features, or shortcomings you find. By the same taken don'thesitate to list "plus" items, too. These serve as encouragement, as an incentive and a reward for dedicated effort. Too, be constructive in any criticism. In courses such as history, physics, electronics where progress and change are marked, even on a day-to-date basis, some dating of material is readily apparent so that here reasonable up-to-dateness is the norm, rather than copyright.

References:

For additional detailed guidance use the Accrediting Commission's Examiners' Instructions for Examiners, Document 1.1, and 3.1, the objectives and standards.

Please respect the confidential nature of this very important work to which you will give so much of your time and experience.

Forwarding of Reports

Send original copy of your report to the Chairman of your Examining Team. Send a carbon copy (or whenever possible, 15 duplicated copies) to the Executive Secretary, Accrediting Commission, National Home Study Council, 2000 "K" Street, N. W., Washington 6, D. C.

RA/9/61

Document 7.1

ACCREDITING COMMISSION
National Home Study Council

HOW THE ACCREDITING COMMISSION RECEIVES, CONSIDERS, AND ACTS UPON APPLICATIONS

Each member of the Accrediting Commission receives a file which includes:

a. Copy of the application

b. Self-Evaluation Report

c. Examining Committee Report; individual minority reports

d. Subject Specialist Reports

e. Summary of nationwide survey of federal, state and local agencies

f. Summary of conflicts and problems relative to the school

These reports are prepared to aid the Commission in passing upon the qualifications of the school for accreditation and with the intention of being useful to the applying institution. The results of subject-course content review, reports from State Education Departments, Better Business Bureaus, Federal Trade Commission published summaries, and other sources, and relevant data from the NHSC files are brought before the Commission for consideration.

The Examining Committee Report has no official standing until the Commission has received and acted upon it. The Commission has the right to edit or alter the report for the official record after the Examining Committee has presented it.

Process of Consideration: The full Commission takes final action on every application, it does not delegate this responsibility. Whenever the Commission deems it advisable, it may request the chairman of the Examining Committee to appear before the Commission to interpret the findings.

Advisory Committees on Reports: To expedite work, the Commission Chairman may appoint an Advisory Committee of three of its members to ensure complete and thorough consideration of every application and Report.

The Advisory Committees analyze Reports, and all additional data and suggest to the Commission what action, in their judgment, is advisable with reasons therefor. Then the Commission receives both the original Reports and the Advisory Committee's findings on them, and takes what action the Commission deems appropriate.

If the Commission does not agree with the recommendation of an Advisory Committee, and the chairman of the Examining Committee concerned has not been heard, final action may be deferred until the chairman can meet with the Commission.

The Commission takes one of the following actions on each evaluation report:

1. To accredit the applicant. One or more qualifications may be added:
   a. To request reports of progress toward correcting weaknesses noted in the Examining Committee Report or noted by the Commission.
   b. To direct representatives to visit the institution informally, for first-hand observation and consultation, after the progress reports have been received.
2. To continue an accredited institution on the accredited list.

3. To defer decision, pending:

   a. Additional evidence.

   b. Progress reports, and an informal re-examining visit following the receipt of progress reports.

   c. A statement of the school's plan for improvements and progress reports.

4. To deny accreditation to an applicant:

   The institution may request another Examining Committee visit or other evaluation when it considers itself ready but not sooner than one-year after its prior examination. Deferments and denials will be accompanied by a statement of conditions which must be met before the school may reapply or request a review of its case.

5. To drop an institution from the accredited list. No accredited school will be removed from the accredited list without a full-scale inspection by an Examining Committee unless such an examination is refused by the school.

6. To request an institution to show cause why it should not be dropped from the accredited list. This action requires:

   a. Progress reports showing correction of the weaknesses to which attention has been called, and/or

   b. Full re-evaluation at a specified time, at the discretion of the Commission

General Policies

1. The Examining Committee has discharged its reponsibilities when it has made its Report to the Commission and the chairman has appeared in person upon request of the Commission. All correspondence thereafter should be directed to the Secretary of the Commission, not to the chairman or to any member of the Examining Committee.

2. The Commission may use supplementary and incidental methods of obtaining information in addition to that furnished by an Examining Committee when in its judgment such information may be helpful. Similarly the Commission may seek information on the operations of an accredited school regarding its continued compliance with accreditation standards.

3. The Commission will judge an institution upon the total picture it presents in terms of the announced purposes and objectives it seeks to serve. Superiority in some characteristics may be regarded as compensating for non-crucial and correctible weaknesses in other respects.

4. Annually the Commission will issue and distribute to the public a list of accredited schools.

5. All accredited schools will be re-examined periodically; at least every five years a complete re-examination similar to the original accrediting examination will be required.

6. Annual Reports will be required of all accredited schools.

Document 9.1

ACCREDITING COMMISSION
National Home Study Council

ANNUAL REPORT[1]

Return original to:

Accrediting Commission
National Home Study Council
2000 "K" Street, N. W.
Washington 6, D. C.

Attach additional pages if necessary

Name of School _____ Date of Report _____ 19___

1. We have added the following new courses since April 1 last year: (List by title and show highest tuition fee on time payment plan. List standard outside texts used or send a copy of instructional material used -- or refer to copies already sent to the NHSC.)

2. We dropped the following courses since April 1 last year:

3. We made the following major revisions in our courses: (Indicate number of instructional units added or replaced, number of old units revised, and extent of revision.)

4. Our new enrollments for the year total _____; our total active enrollment file of students totals _____ on the date of this report.

5. Our non-start rate (%) is _____; dropout rate (%) is ____; number of students graduating this year totals _____ or _____% of the active enrollment.

6. These significant changes in ownership of the school were made since April 1 last year.

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1. The period of this report is the National Home Study Council fiscal year April 1 - March 31. The report should be submitted to the Accrediting Commission by July 1st.

7. Here is a list of our chief administrative officers and faculty personnel: (List with titles such officers as executive head of the school and the chief persons in charge of education and instruction, research, advertising, sales, tuition collection, etc.) Please star * persons new to their positions since April 1 last year.

8. We made these significant changes in policy regarding sales and enrollment of students since April 1 last year:

9. We made these significant changes in policy regarding tuition payment plans, tuition rates, and methods of collecting tuition -- since April 1 last year:

10. We have changed our address, made building changes, or added or reduced space in the following respects:

Officer making report

(Please return even if no changes have been made.)

ERIC Clearinghouse
MAR 1 1968
on Adult Education

RA/9/61